

CONVERT CONFIRMATIONS.

10.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED TO THE CONVERTS FROM ROMANISM
IN WEST GALWAY,
IN SEPTEMBER, 1851,

BY THE

HON. AND RIGHT REV.

THOMAS, LORD BISHOP OF TUAM,
KILLALA, AND ACHONRY.

TOGETHER WITH

A REPORT

OF THE TOUR FOR MISSIONARY CONFIRMATIONS
UPON THE SAME OCCASION,
DRAWN UP BY HIS LORDSHIP'S ORDER.

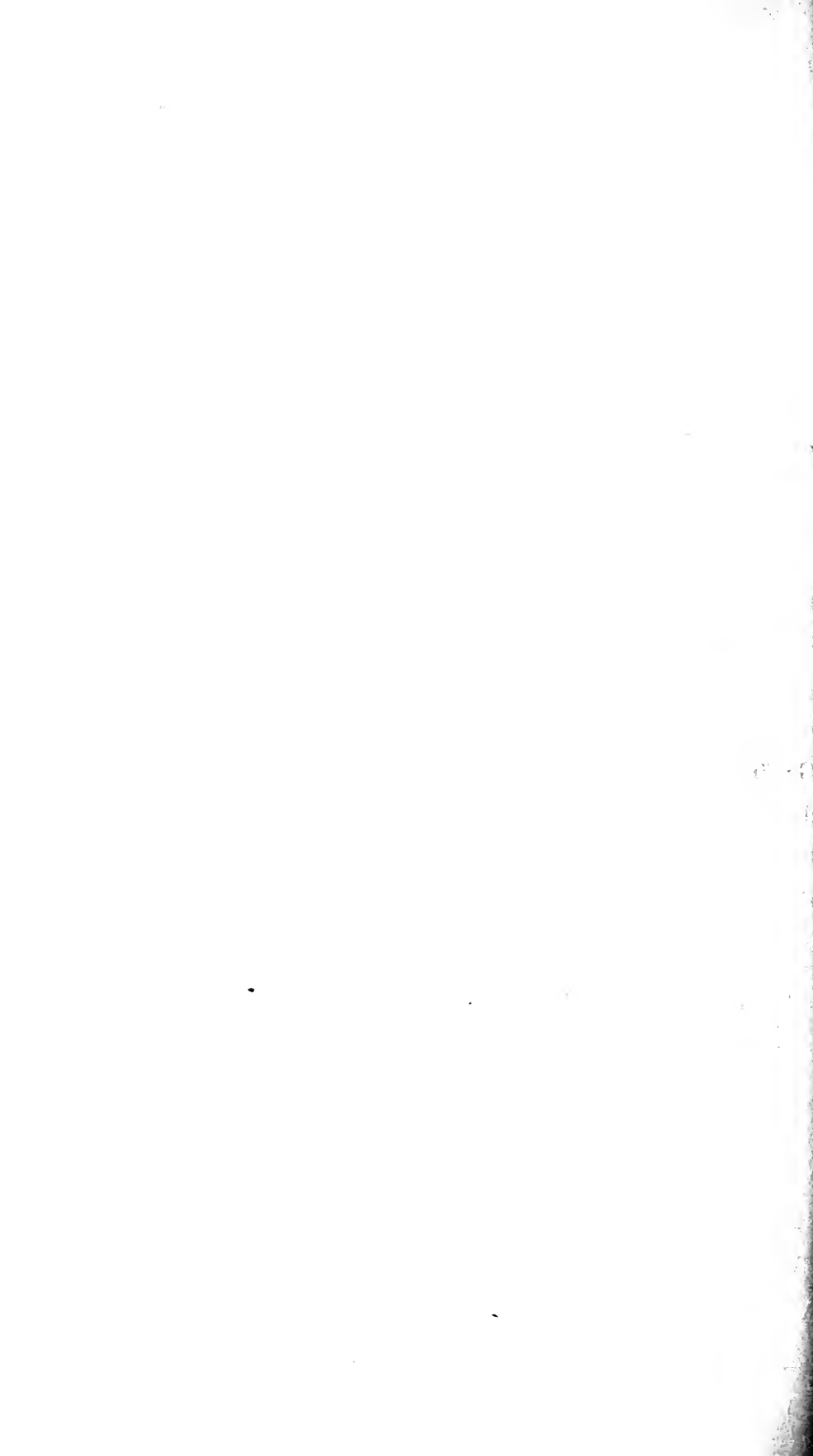
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Several persons, not personally connected with the Diocese, who were present on the occasion which drew forth the following discourse, have requested that it might be published. Under ordinary circumstances, such a request, though kindly made, would not have been complied with ; but the success which has attended the Missions to the Roman Catholics in the West of Ireland communicates a peculiar interest to the recent Confirmations. As this interest has given rise to the request, it may also be considered as justifying the compliance ; the more so as a legitimate occasion is thereby afforded, for the publication of a very exact report of the statistical details connected with the Confirmation of the Converts to whom the Discourse was addressed. These details suggest considerations of much importance in forming a due estimate of the progress, which, under the Divine blessing, has recently been made in the Reformation in Ireland.

November, 1851.



A DISCOURSE,

&c.

“AND HE WENT THROUGH SYRIA AND CILICIA,
CONFIRMING THE CHURCHES.”—*Acts* xv. 41.

WHEN we consider the great want of information relating to the internal arrangement of the church, in the age of the apostles; and that almost all our knowledge is to be gleaned from the scanty records that St. Luke and St. Paul have left us; that the one wrote principally to record the miracles by which our faith was established, and to enforce the truth of christianity; and that the other endeavoured more to inculcate fundamental doctrines than to prescribe external rites, or rules of discipline; we shall have no cause to wonder that the service and ordinances of the primitive church are so little known, and must be traced with such difficulty. It is true that many corruptions crept in during a

long night of ignorance, while superstition clouded the face of truth, and made the church of Christ appear more as the gloomy sepulchre of human happiness, than as an edifice raised to the glory of God, and the security and consolation of His creatures. But we have long, by God's assistance, rent the veil which obscured the Sun of Righteousness, and thrown off those galling fetters which enslave the mind and tie it down to the footstool of a weak and fallible mortal. The established Church of this kingdom owns no rule of faith but the gospel; no mode of discipline, no rites or ceremonies, but such as are built upon the precepts of Christ, or the practice of His apostles.

Confirmation, to the use and importance of which I wish at present to draw your attention, is a rite so plainly derived from the practice of the Apostles, that for several ages it was considered as a means of obtaining the favour of God, and a visible conveyance of the blessings of the Gospel; and is now held by ourselves as of chief importance to the credit of the Church, and the spiritual welfare of a Christian. The corrupt Church of Rome has indeed debased this primitive ordinance, as it has almost every doctrine and practice of the Scriptures, and has loaded it with many unscriptural and superstitious ceremonies; but this should only serve the more to recommend to us the pure and lovely character of the rite itself, as it is retained in our Protestant Church. In her ob-

servances of this rite we discern no useless parade, or trifling ceremony ; all is plain, significant, and simple.

The form prescribed by our Church is borrowed from the usage of those, whose practice it should be our study to imitate, and whose mandates are of perpetual obligation. We not only read in the words of the text, that St. Paul, after the conversion and consequent baptism of many of the inhabitants of Syria, and Cilicia, went through those provinces confirming the *Churches* ; but in another chapter of the Acts, it is recorded that Peter and John had been sent from Jerusalem, for the express purpose of confirming the Samaritans in the faith, and *to lay their hands upon them*, after they had received the Word, and had been admitted as converts to Christianity by baptism. From all which it is at least undeniable that it was the practice of the Apostles to lay their hands on the first Christian converts after baptism, and to pray for them. The excellent ends and uses of this, which still continue, very much confirm the supposition, that it was not designed for that particular season only ; while the mention of the *doctrine of baptism*, and of *laying on of hands*, together, by St. Paul, in his enumeration of such rites and doctrines as are plainly fundamental, seems almost equivalent to a command for its adoption.

Accordingly, the continuance of this holy institution may be traced back from our own time to the earliest ages of the Gospel; when we know from contemporary writers, that it was customary for the Bishop to go abroad, and imposing his hands, pray for the gift of the Holy Ghost on those who had been already baptized.

Such, briefly, is the history of this holy rite. And the first great end and use of it is (as we have seen), that such persons as have been baptized when young, may, in the face of the Church, and before its spiritual governors, publicly take upon themselves their Christian profession, and the discharge of that vow which was made for them by others, when they could not make it for themselves. When, therefore, our sureties have, by education, contributed their pious endeavours to the end that Christian principles may fix themselves upon our hearts, and influence our conduct, it is a good and holy custom, that, at a proper age, we should come forward to acquit them of their charge, and personally engage to continue the good work thus begun.

And if we will not openly with our own mouths confirm the vows, and lay claim to the benefit of our baptismal covenant, and promise, that, by God's grace, we will evermore endeavour to believe and act as becomes the Gospel

of Christ, that covenant is renounced on our part, and as far as we can do so, our baptism is made no baptism.

Another important end for which the office of Confirmation is retained by us is, that all persons who thus openly declare their perseverance in the Christian profession, may be solemnly dedicated to the discharge of its duties, by the imposition of hands, preparatory to their first participating of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This being the highest act of Christian worship, it has always justly been thought necessary, that all persons should give the strongest, and most public proofs of their being Christians indeed, before they are admitted to it, by confessing with their mouths the Lord Jesus, and declaring their fixed resolution to perform their part of the covenant, of which they claim the privileges. And Confirmation is required, as being such a confession and declaration, made openly in the face of the assembled Church, and accompanied by the solemn dedication of the confirmed to the obedience of Christ, by those who have been separated to minister and to bless in his name. As to the form of doing this, by the laying on of hands, it is an ancient usage, warranted by the example of patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and other holy men of God, whose benedictions we cannot believe to have been ineffectual; and if considered only as adding solemnity to the office,

it never can be deemed vain or superstitious by us, when we recollect that it was a form used by our Lord Himself on earth, who, when young children were brought unto Him, *put his hands upon them and blessed them.*

Again, we trust that by the prayers of the assembled congregation, the assistance of the Holy Spirit may be obtained for those who are thus dedicated to God. The general promises of Scripture are our ground of confidence that the prayers of the faithful will be heard for other men: "for the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

And surely, if ever it be more proper than at other times to implore God's help for our fellow-christians; if ever it be more than ordinarily wanted, or ought with more than common earnestness to be asked for them, it is upon their first entering on that time of life, when their own passions from within, and the world's multiplied temptations from without, will solicit them with most violence to transgress God's Commandments: when they are at the same time taking upon themselves such engagements, as we know they are not able to perform without His assistance.

The extraordinary influences of the Spirit have indeed been long since withdrawn from men. But though the believer, who is now sent forth into the world with the prayers and blessings of the Church of Christ, can no longer cast out devils, or take up serpents, or drink any deadly

poison without harm ; yet so many as with faith unfeigned, and fitting preparation ; shall be partakers of this holy ordinance, “these signs” we are assured, “shall follow them.”

In Christ’s name they shall cast out the evil spirit of lust, and pride, and selfishness, and spiritual indifference : they shall trample on the great serpent, the Devil ; and through the grace of God, henceforth be unharmed by that worst poison of the soul, the daily intercourse with those, who calling themselves Christians, care neither for the threats nor promises of the Gospel, and do not, in their hearts, believe in them.

Those now to be admitted to Confirmation have, with few exceptions, been baptized in a corrupt and apostate Church ; but they have been only pledged by their baptism to the covenant of grace. The beautiful simplicity of the institution of Christ has, indeed, been clouded, and disfigured by the addition of superfluous superstitions, and absurd ceremonies ; but the weak and helpless infant has been nevertheless enlisted as a soldier in His Saviour’s service, to whom alone his allegiance is due : now that he has arrived at a competent age, having been carefully instructed in the duties he owes to the great Captain of his salvation, he has fully resolved to keep the commandments of his Lord with all his heart and soul, and walk according to the precepts of the Bible.

You are all now, my young friends, about to make that good profession, and to confirm it by a most solemn act. You are about to undertake a charge the most serious in the life of man, and most important in its consequences. It is very fitting therefore, you should show that you are not ashamed of your Saviour and Redeemer: and how can you do this better than by confessing Him openly before men? You are about to enrol yourselves under the banner of the cross and abjure for ever the soul-destroying errors, corruptions, and superstitions of the Church of Rome. The Almighty will receive your vows; but remember He will look to the future, and expect your fidelity even unto death. Consider the worth of that knowledge which you have received by the diligent teaching of the Church, which now opens her bosom to receive you, and is, I trust, practicably awakened to a sense of her obligations. But, thanks be to God, so far as she has attempted to discharge them, she has begun to reap a plentiful blessing, the abundant evidence of which I have now the gratification of beholding. It unfolds the enlivening and cheering prospect of a season, when, by the mercy of Divine Providence on the prudent and well directed zeal of His devoted servants, that blessing will be spread over this benighted land, and those clouds which had so long intercepted the saving beams of truth will be removed by the unre-

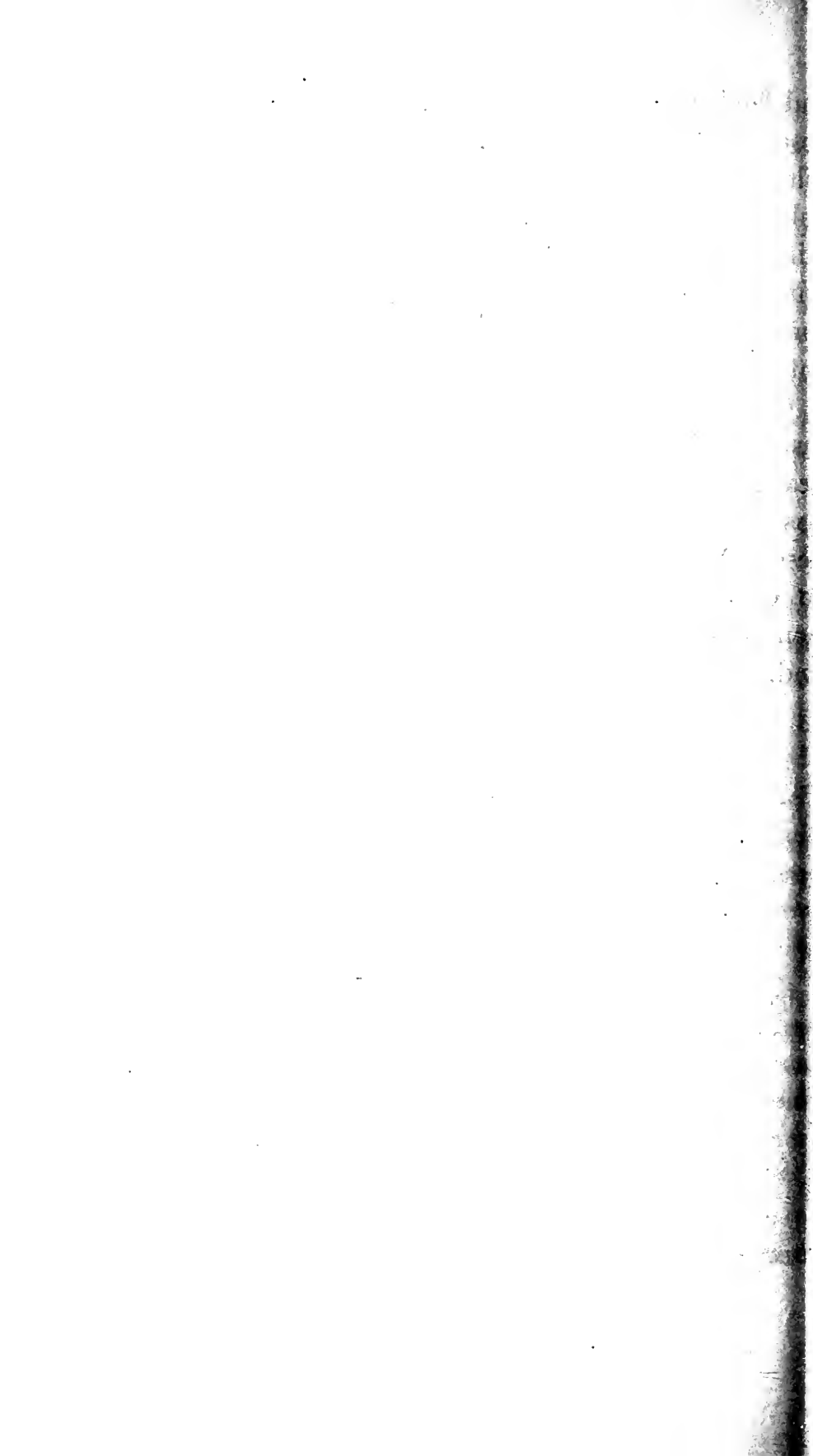
stricted diffusion of the Word of God. We cannot forget that this was the great instrument by which the Reformation was effected — the great instrument by which our own Scriptural and Apostolic Church was emancipated from the slavery of Anti-Christ, and emerged out of the darkness of Papal corruption, into the glorious light of Protestant purity and truth. And, my young friends, it is by the same instrument that you are now called from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. You have been hitherto kept in error and ignorance by those who, while they pretended to be your religious instructors, have opposed all attempts to educate you, and resisted by every means in their power the introduction of the knowledge of true religion among you. Good reason have you, then, to be thankful that a way has been opened to lead you to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. You stand forth now in a new character; you go forth of your own free will, and in the full consent and testimony of your own hearts, confessing yourselves to be “members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.”

But, remember, that this confession of Christ must be attended with sincerity of faith, and simplicity of obedience. You must beware of any decline from the purity of the Gospel. Salvation by grace, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, must be the foundation of your religion.

The doctrine of justification by faith only through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ and not of our own works and deservings, is the main feature of this salvation. Abide then in the truth,—press forward to the prize of your high calling, and continue in the faith to which you are pledged. And this leads me to notice the deep anxiety which the great Apostle, St. Paul, evinced as to the habitual use which his youthful convert should make of the instruction thus early received: “Continue thou,” says the Apostle, “in the things which thou hast learned, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.” And if you will allow me to pass from the anxiety of the Apostle for Timothy to my pastoral solicitude for you, my youthful fellow-christians, I would now say to you, continue you in the things which you have learned, remembering from whom you have learned them. Value the Christian privileges to which you are invited, and stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free. You might still have had your lot where men are taught to bow down to idols as their gods: no holy page of truth and love would have been opened to your sight: you might still have been among those, over whose soul’s welfare no fond anxiety ever watched; no dying Saviour’s grace would have been presented to your thoughts. But the lot has fallen to you in pleasant places. You are surrounded with abundant means of grace.

and facilities of instruction ; and you have in Christ Jesus a goodly heritage. You have the privilege of knowing the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus: you are blessed with the doctrine of salvation ; you are called to the privileges of Christianity ; and you will have entered personally into covenant with God.

Continue then, I repeat, in these things ; hold fast the inestimable advantages they confer ; and heartily thank your Heavenly Father that He has called you to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ your Saviour ; and pray continually to God that He may give you His grace, that you may continue in the same unto your life's end.



R E P O R T

Of the Tour for Missionary Confirmations, by the Lord Bishop of Tuam, in West Galway, in the month of September, 1851.—Drawn up by order of the Bishop.

On *Tuesday, 16th Sept.*, at 12 o'clock, the Bishop of Tuam arrived at OUGHTERARD. The Catechumens from five different localities were assembled at that hour, and proceeded from the Mission School-house to the church, where they were arranged. Upon the arrival of the Bishop and the clergy, prayers were read by the Rev. Robt. Browne, Perpetual Curate of the parish of Kilcummin in which Oughterard is situated. The Bishop delivered a discourse to the catechumens and the people; after which the rite of Confirmation was administered to 99 persons. The congregation was very large, and consisted of a great number of Roman Catholics, besides the protestant gentry of the neighbourhood.

The persons confirmed here were divided as follow:—From Oughterard 49; from Glan 9; from Ross 14; from Inverin 20; 6 from Spiddal; and one person from Galway; making 99 in all. Of these, 10 were original protestants, and 89 converts from Romanism. 52 were males, and 47 females. The ages were

thus classed :—25 were fourteen years old and under,—38 were above fourteen and under twenty years,—18 between twenty and thirty,—11 between thirty and forty,—6 between forty and fifty, and 1 above fifty.

The number of catechumens who came from Inverin was but a small part of those who had been examined and approved by the Missionary there. His return contained the names of 65 persons who had been prepared to attend for confirmation at Spiddal, where the new church, which is being built, was intended to be consecrated; as, however, the building was not sufficiently advanced, the Bishop held no confirmation at Spiddal, and the people from the further part of the district, being 40 miles from Oughterard, could not come so far; 28 of them however determined to make the journey, and set out at midnight for the purpose. Eight of them found it impossible to get over the mountain which lies between Inverin and Oughterard, therefore only 20 actually received confirmation from that Mission.

At three o'clock on the same day, the Bishop proceeded to the Missionary School-house at GLAN, where the Missionaries of the district, and all the other agents of the Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics were assembled for an episcopal inspection. There were present upon this occasion, two Vice-Presidents of the Society, the Lord Bishop of Tuam and the Earl of Roden; two members of the Committee, Chas. H. Frewen, Esq., M.P., and Anthony Lefroy, Esq.; and one of the Honorary Secretaries, by whom they were addressed, under the direction of the Bishop, and in the name of the Committee. The following were the number of agents present. Three Missionaries; fourteen Readers; three Assistant Readers; seven Probationers; eight Schoolmasters; and three Schoolmistresses; making in all, 38. Several of the Irish Teachers of the district were also present.

These agents came from the following fourteen Missionary Stations. Castelterke, South Corrib, Kilmilkin, Curnamona, Glan, Oughterard, Ross, Inverin, Casla, Lettermore, Tourmakeady, Partry, Headford, and Galway.

The Bishop closed the meeting by pronouncing the blessing.

Wednesday, 17th Sept.—The Bishop embarked at Oughterard, and proceeded up the Lake to CASTELKERKE, arriving at the Missionary Parsonage at noon, where he was met by the Rector of the parish of Cong, the Rev. E. L. Moore, and the Missionary, the Rev. John O'Callaghan. The confirmation took place immediately in the School-house, which was densely crowded by converts and others, while considerable numbers remained outside, unable to find room. Prayers were read by the Rector, some part being read in Irish by the Missionary. After a discourse from the Bishop, 96 persons were confirmed; 34 belonging to Castelkerke, 15 to Kilmilkin, 24 to Curnamona, and 23 to South Corrib. Three of these persons were original protestants; and 93 were converts from Romanism. The number of males were 53, and of females 43. The ages were as follows:—16 were of the age of fourteen and under, —50 from that to twenty,—13 from that to thirty,—7 from that to forty,—5 from that to fifty,—4 from that to sixty,—and 1 above sixty.

Besides these persons, a number of children whose parents were converts were brought by the Missionary to the Bishop for confirmation, all of whom had proved themselves to possess so satisfactory a knowledge of the christian religion, and could reply so intelligently to all the questions of the catechism, that the Missionary did not feel himself at liberty to refuse them tickets of approval. But their ages were only eleven, twelve, and thirteen years, and through famine and other circumstances, their appearance was much more juvenile than their actual age. After consultation with the Rector, the Bishop determined that their confirmation should be deferred to a future occasion. The number of persons thus postponed was 43.

After the confirmation, the children of the school were examined by a number of clergymen who accompanied the Bishop, and their answers manifested a very considerable advancement in scriptural knowledge.

Thursday, 18th Sept.—The Bishop arrived at SALRUCK before noon. Previous to the service, the children of the Mission-school were examined by the clergy, who expressed great

satisfaction at their knowledge. Divine service was read by the Missionary, the Rev. Wm. Kennedy, partly in Irish and partly in English. A large congregation was assembled, the greater part of which were converts and Roman Catholics. The confirmation took place, at which 30 persons were confirmed—two being original protestants, and 28 being converts from Romanism. A discourse was delivered, according to the direction of the Bishop, by the Honorary Secretary of the Society for Irish Church Missions.

Of the persons confirmed here, 17 were males and 13 females. Their ages were 7 of fourteen years and under,—9 from that to twenty,—6 from that to thirty,—4 from that to forty,—3 from that to fifty,—and 1 above fifty years.

On the morning of the confirmation, 14 persons, who had been undecided until then, came to the Missionary; but as they had not given him an opportunity of ascertaining their fitness, he refused to admit them, and deferred their confirmation to a future occasion.

Proceeding onward to Clifden, the Bishop inspected the new church, building at MOYARD BRIDGE, which is to become the parish church of Ballinakill, the principal parish of the large union that bore that name, and which has recently been divided into four incumbencies. It had been hoped that this church might have been in a state for consecration by this time; but as this was found to be impossible, the Committee engaged in conducting the building attended with the contractor, to show the church to the Bishop, together with the spot for the burial ground, kindly given by F. I. Graham, Esq., the proprietor. The contractor stated that he would deliver up the church in a fit state for consecration, at christmas next, and the Bishop expressed his readiness to attend for the purpose when the building should be completed.

Friday 19th Sept.—The Female School at FAKERAGH was visited and examined by the clergy, and the progress of the children was highly approved.

The Bishop proceeded to BALLYCONREE, where a large con-

gregation of converts was assembled at the new School-room, which had been completed for the occasion. When the partition which separates the boys and girl's school is removed, the room is 50 feet by 20.

It was formally opened for divine service upon this occasion. Prayers were read by the Rector of the parish, the Rev. H. D'Arcy, and the Missionary, the Rev. R. Ryder, partly in Irish and partly in English.

The confirmation took place, at which 115 persons were confirmed, every one of whom were converts from Romanism. By direction of the Bishop, a discourse was delivered by the Hon. Sec. of the Society for Irish Church Missions. The catechumens here were all belonging to the district: 37 being the elder children of the Connemara Orphans' Nursery, and 78 being the converts of Ballyconree. 57 were males and 58 females. Their ages were 66 of fourteen years and under,—26 from fourteen to twenty,—6 under thirty,—11 under forty,—and 6 under fifty years of age.

After the Confirmation, the Bishop, as Patron of THE CONNEMARA ORPHANS' NURSERY, made a visitation of that institution. The children, 78 in number, were presented to the Bishop, who went through the details of the establishment; and after seeing the arrangements of the house, the work of the children, their gardening, &c, expressed his approbation in warm terms. His Lordship spoke to the children, who were then addressed at large by the Honorary Secretary, and the Bishop left them after giving them his blessing.

On the morning of this day it had been suggested, that as many clergymen and gentlemen from England were present, it might be a good opportunity to explain to the Roman Catholics of the town of Clifden, the misrepresentations so commonly made to them, concerning the feelings of the English people, with respect to Romanism. The Schoolmaster was sent round the town, to knock at each door and inform the inhabitants that a meeting for this purpose would be held in the School-room. It was scarcely expected that from so short a notice, and under such circumstances, any considerable number of persons would be

likely to attend. At seven o'clock in the evening, the Bishop, accompanied by the Clergy and the party of friends who happened to be in Connemara, proceeded to the School-room, which was already crowded (at least 450 persons were present); and a very large proportion were respectable Roman Catholics.

At the desire of the Bishop, the Rector of the parish took the Chair, and opened the meeting with a hymn and prayer, in which the Roman Catholics did not scruple to join. The meeting was then addressed by the Rev. Alfred Hill, Vicar of Morebath, in Devonshire, who stated the facts which came within his own knowledge, demonstrating the general feeling which exists in England, repugnant to the doctrines of Romanism. The Rev. W. Swainson, of Northampton, then followed, and corroborated the statements of Mr. Hill. The Rev. Edward Ellis, Corresponding Secretary for the Society for Irish Church Missions, now employed in Dublin, and previously at Doon, on the borders of Tipperary and Limerick, explained to the meeting the facts connected with the remarkable progress of the reformation amongst the Roman Catholics in both those places.

A short address was added by the Rev. A. Dallas; the Doxology was sung, and the Bishop closed the meeting with the blessing.

Saturday, 20th Sept.—This day the Confirmation took place at CLIFDEN Church, which being too small to contain the great number of people who assembled, many were forced to remain in the Church-yard. The prayers were read by the Rector, the Rev. H. D'Arcy; a discourse was delivered by the Bishop; and the Confirmation then followed, at which 200 persons were Confirmed. Twelve of these were original Protestants; 188 were converts from Romanism. The catechumens came from six different localities. From Clifden itself there were 66; from Barratrough 55; from Errislannon 11; from Ballinaboy 11; from Roundstone 21; and from Moyrus 36; making in all 200. 108 of these were males, and 92 females; their ages were as follow:—94 of fourteen years and under; 75 above fourteen and under twenty; 15 under thirty; 13 under forty; 2 under

fifty; and 1 under sixty. Three persons came up to the Communion rails for Confirmation, who were not provided with certificates of approval, and upon reference to the Missionary, were found not to have applied to him, and they were therefore deferred.

In the afternoon the Bishop proceeded to DERRYGIMLA, in the promontory of Errismore. The large School-house of Derrygimla, which has been some time building, though not yet completed for want of the necessary funds, is however so far advanced as to be temporarily arranged for the occasion. Sails were cast over the rafters of the roof, and loose boards were placed on the joists of the floor of a large portion of the room; and the Bishop consented to hold the Confirmation in it. Prayers were here read, partly in Irish and partly in English, by the Missionary, the Rev. Wm. Kilbride. A full congregation of converts and Roman Catholics occupied the farther part of the room; and 119 catechumens (76 from Derrygimla, 20 from Aillebrack, and 23 from Duholla) were arranged before the Bishop, on that part which had been temporarily prepared.

After a discourse, which the Bishop addressed to the people and the catechumens, the Confirmation took place. Two of those confirmed were original Protestants, and 117 were converts from Romanism; the number of males was 59, and number of females 60. The ages were as follows:—of fourteen years and under there were 22; from that to twenty years 48; under thirty there were 20; under forty there were 15; under fifty there were 12; under sixty there were 2. Besides these, eight persons had come to the Missionary, on the previous day, for Confirmation; but as he had given notice that he would receive none without a month's preparation, he deferred them to another occasion.

Sunday, 21st Sept.—As three of the Missionary deacons were in a position to require Priests orders, the Bishop appointed this day for a public ordination in the town of Clifden. Two of these Missionaries are converted Roman Catholics. From the small size of the church, the necessary arrangements were made with great difficulty. The seat in front of the communion rails

was occupied by the three Deacons. A large number of Clergy in gowns or surplices, were placed immediately behind them; and the remainder of the church being given up to the general congregation, every spot, whether of sitting or standing room, was fully occupied. Upwards of 200 persons remained outside the church during the whole of the service, which lasted three hours and a half. A large proportion of these persons were Romanists. The utmost decorum was observed, and a spirit of devotional attention seemed to pervade the congregation. This was especially remarkable when in the ordination service, after the pause for silent prayer on behalf of the candidates for the priesthood, the *Veni Creator* was sung; a large number of the congregation joined with great solemnity. Prayers being read by the Rector, Rev. H. D'Arcy, the sermon was preached by Rev. A. Dallas, from the text Acts xvii. 1—5; in which, after dwelling upon the subject of the Missionaries' preaching, he drew a comparison between the rapid growth of the Church in Thessalonica, and the almost equal rapid growth of the Reformation in Connemara; especially pointing out the similarity of circumstances, alluding to events with which the people of Clifden were well acquainted.

At the ordination the following ten Presbyters assisted in the imposition of hands—Rev. H. D'Arcy, Rev. B. Clarke, Rev. R. Ryder, Rev. W. Kilbride, Rev. Sir C. Lighton, Rev. J. Lefroy, Rev. A. Hill, Rev. F. Seymour, Rev. E. Ellis, and Rev. A. Dallas. At the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, there were 105 communicants, several of whom were persons who had been confirmed on the previous day.

As there were so many Clergymen present, the Bishop arranged that the different congregations of the district should have the advantage of hearing the gospel from other lips than the ordinary Ministers; and the evening Services were settled as follow. At Clifden church Rev. F. Seymour read prayers, and Rev. A. Hill preached. The workhouse Service was conducted by Rev. J. Lefroy; Rev. E. Ellis preached at Derrygimla; Rev. C. Conelly preached in Irish at Ballyconree; and the Rev. A. Dallas preached in Sellerna.

Monday, 22nd Sept.—The Bishop visited the school at Bar-ratrough—the children of which were examined by the Clergy, who expressed great satisfaction at the examination.

A piece of ground kindly given by — McCreight Esq. was taken possession of, as the site for a School-house—the funds for erecting which will probably be raised in England by the exertions of two gentlemen, who recently visited the Missions; and have expressed their desire to testify the approbation of the work, by procuring the means of erecting such a building.

The Bishop proceeded to SELLERNA to hold a Confirmation. The prayers were read in Irish by the Missionary, Rev. J. Conerney, and the Lessons in English by the Rector, Rev. H. D'Arcy. A discourse was addressed by the Bishop to a crowded congregation, who had not been deterred by the rain from attending the Service.

Eighty-four persons were confirmed here from Sellerna and its neighbouring Stations—Cleggan, Omev, and Claddaghduff. Two of these were originally protestants, and 82 were converts. 35 were males, and 49 were females. Of those whose ages were fourteen years and under there were 20; there were 51 between fourteen and twenty; there were 8 under thirty; 4 under forty; and 1 above fifty years.

A portion of land having been given by Sir C. Lighton (who has recently become the proprietor of part of this estate) for the purpose of building a church, and a Parsonage house, and for a burying ground, the proper documents were signed upon this occasion; and as the burying ground had been fenced, the Bishop proceeded to consecrate it, in order that the rites of Christian burial might be afforded to the converts, although some time will elapse before the church can be erected. The falling rain did not prevent a large number of persons from following the Bishop and Clergy to the spot to be consecrated; and the ceremony was performed in the presence of many Roman Catholics, who conducted themselves with great decorum upon the occasion.

The Bishop returned to Clifden, after having visited the Missionary in the very unsuitable and inconvenient cabin, which is

the only residence he can obtain, until means are found for building a house upon the ground given by Sir C. Lighton.

The list of admitted catechumens, given to the Bishop by the Missionary at Sellerna, contained the names of 167 persons. Upon subsequent enquiry, as to the reason why only 84 had actually received Confirmation, it was found that the strongest means had been resorted to by some landlords, and their agents, over the parents of many of the young persons, and in some cases by the parents themselves to prevent those over whom they had influence from being confirmed. No fewer than 83 persons had been thus impeded after having been examined and approved by the Missionary. The same reason accounts for similar discrepancies which exist between the lists of other Missionaries, and the numbers actually confirmed. These shew a difference of 30 in other places, besides the 83 at Sellerna, where the strongest opposition has long been exercised.

This being the seventh and last place where the Confirmations were held, the following SUMMARY may be given of the whole.

The Catechumens came from 24 localities to 7 places for Confirmation.

The total number actually confirmed was 31 original Protestants, and 712 converts from Romanism—total 743.

Of these, 381 were males, and 362 females.

The ages were as follows:—of fourteen years old and under, there were 250. Above the age of fourteen, and including the age of twenty, there were 297. Above the age of twenty, and under seventy, there were 196.

The persons of this last age were divided thus:—86 between twenty and thirty,—65 between thirty and forty,—34 between forty and fifty,—10 between fifty and sixty,—and 1 of the age of seventy.

Although the total number of converts actually confirmed was only 712, yet the 45 who could not come from Inverin, Casla, and Lettermore, should be added.

The 83 forcibly prevented at Sellerna, and the 30 at other places, making together 113, ought also to be added.

These two numbers, added to the 712, give a total of 870 converts, who would have been confirmed but for the impediments alleged.

Besides these, the young persons might be added, whose diminutive size, rather than their age, occasioned the postponement of their confirmation after they had been examined and fully approved by the Missionaries; who, it should be remembered, had besides at every Station rejected several who had not satisfied them in the course of the preparatory examination.

The number thus postponed at Castelkerke was 43; and at the other Stations 35, making 78. Had their certificates of approval been received by the Bishop, they would have made the total 948, which was the precise number of converts examined, approved, and certified by the Missionaries.

If the 14 persons in Salruck had come to the Missionary in time, as well as the three persons who were turned back at Clifden, and the eight persons who had not given sufficient notice at Derrygimla, these 25, (had they been approved) would have made the total number to be 973 converts, besides the 31 Protestants.

On the evening of Monday, 22nd Sept., there was a visitation and inspection of the Missionaries and agents in the Schoolroom at Clifden, similar to that which had taken place at the Schoolroom in Glan.

There were present the agents of the Society for Irish Church Missions employed in the whole district of Connemara, including the following sixteen Stations.

Clifden, Salruck, Sellerna, Cleggan, Omey, Claddaghduff, Ballyconree, Barratrough, Turbot Island and Innishturk, Errislanon, Ballynaboy, Derrygimla, Aillebrach, Duholla, Roundstone, Moyrus.

The agents present were 1 Superintendent; 5 Missionaries; 12 Readers; 5 Assistant Readers; 9 Probationers; 12 Schoolmasters; 1 Assistant Schoolmaster; 10 Schoolmistress;—in all 55 agents.

Some of the Irish Teachers of the district were also present.

They were addressed on the part of the Committee by the Hono-

rary Secretary of the Society of the Irish Church Missions; and the Bishop, after speaking to them, dismissed them with the blessing.

Tuesday, 23rd Sept.—The Bishop having closed his Confirmation tour, left Clifden; but the following occurrences in connexion with the Missionary work took place after his Lordship's departure.

A new school, recently established on **TURBOT ISLAND**, was visited by the Honorary Secretary. This is one of the most destitute and neglected spots in the whole of Connemara. The children attending the school from the two islands of Turbot and Innisturk are 52 in number: and though the school has been opened only six weeks, their progress shows considerable intelligence. The Schoolmaster, who acts also as Reader, had not been present at the visitation of the agents, not having received notice to attend, in consequence of the difficulty of communication with the main-land.

The children of the male and female schools of Ballyconree took formal possession of the new School-room, being placed in it by the Honorary Secretary of the Society.

Wednesday 24th Sept.—The School at **ROUNDSTONE** was visited by the Honorary Secretary, in order to ascertain the arrangements necessary to accommodate the increasing number of children who seek instruction.

The Station at **MOYRUS** was afterwards visited, where the Honorary Secretary was met by a considerable number of the inhabitants, who expressed their thanks for the School. Eighty-three children were present; the First Class was examined, and answered remarkably well.

On the same evening the Hon. Sec. made arrangements for the opening of a new School and Station at **CARNA**, which will be an important addition to the Mission.

Thursday, 25th Sept.—Arrangements were made by the Hon.

Sec. for opening a new School at BALLINAHINCH, in a position likely to advance the cause of the Reformation.

By order of the Bishop of Tuam.

ALEX. R. C. DALLAS, *Hon. Sec.*

27th Sept., 1851.

I have read the above Report, and so far as the circumstances detailed fell within my personal observation, I testify to the correctness of the statements therein made.

THOS. TUAM, &c.

